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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2602
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0467
RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE
RUEHXX/GENEVA IO MISSIONS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0535
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0457
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0305
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0319
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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0191
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
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RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI 1927

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DILI 000279

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DEPT FOR EAP/MTS
NSC FOR HOLLY MORROW
USPACOM FOR JOC AND POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/31/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [PHUM](#) [TT](#) [CU](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: EMBOFFS INTERVIEW NATIONAL POLICE COMMISSIONER IN HIDING

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CLASSIFIED BY: Grover Joseph Rees, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy
Dili, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Vice Interior Minister Alcino Barris, Police Commissioner Paulo Martins and dozens of police officers from all branches have reassembled the national police (PNTL) hierarchy at an orphanage in the hills overlooking Dili. The group has been disarmed by the Australian Defense Forces (ADF) and is operating under the direction of the President. Martins, who has not been seen publicly for several weeks, said he fled Dili after being warned of a plot on his life by Interior Minister Rogerio Lobato. He expects the police to be reinstated soon by the Australian Defense Forces (ADF), reports that military (FDTL) patrols in Dili were more extensive than had been admitted by the government, and like many Timorese views the current crisis in part through the prism of ethnic and regional rivalries. He reports that Minister Lobato is deeply suspicious of the United States and believes East Timor's security forces should rely on the governments of China and Cuba for training. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Emboffs met with Police Commissioner Paulo Martins at a remote site in the hills overlooking Dili on May 29. Martins' headquarters is at an orphanage near the President's house in Balibar, in the hills above Dili. Martins wore shorts, flip-flops, and a customized police shirt adorned with someone else's name. Approximately 50 police officers appeared to be staying at the site. While en route, Emboffs also met briefly with Vice Interior Minister Alcino Barris and Deputy Police Commissioner Ismael Babo.

¶3. (C) Martins, who has not been seen publicly since April 22, said that despite his absence from the public eye, he is still the PNTL Commissioner and answers to the President through Vice Minister of the Interior Alcino Barris. Most PNTL District

Commanders remain loyal to him and the President, he said, particularly those in the western districts. In addition, several hundred police officers were standing by in Dili waiting for his return so they can resume their duties. Martins believes that his men will play an important role in assisting ADF with its operations, but he did not yet know precisely what that role would be.

14. (C) Martins told Emboffs the situation in the country had deteriorated to the point that many Timorese felt that they could only trust members of their own ethnic group. Although he claimed to be critical of this view, he frequently implied that senior military officials and some formerly respected members of the police force could not be trusted because they were Lorosa'e, or easterners.

Why he Fled Dili

15. (C) The Police Commissioner said he fled to the hills after receiving warnings via SMS (cell phone text messages) that Lobato planned to have him killed. These fears were confirmed, he said, when he received an SMS (which he showed to emboffs) from Lobato asking him to meet to discuss a surprise trip to Portugal, followed quickly by another SMS warning him that the plan to kill him would be carried out at the proposed meeting. Martins, who had been actively avoiding Lobato for nearly a week, decided that the situation was too dangerous for him in Dili and chose to flee to the orphanage and put himself under the protection of the President. He believes his life is still in danger and will not travel to Dili without an armed escort.

16. (C) Martins' distaste for the Minister of the Interior is well known. During the meeting he described Lobato as a "stupid" man with the "brain of a terrorist". He said Lobato wanted to have him killed for many reasons, including his persistent efforts to block the politicization of the police and for documenting and, in some cases, circumventing Lobato's improper

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attempts to arm civilians. Lobato, he said, was particularly incensed that Martins changed unit assignments immediately prior to the Fretilin congress, dulling Lobato's efforts to use members of the police to keep dissident Fretilin members in line.

17. (C) Martins said Lobato improperly provided police weapons and uniforms to Fretilin supporters throughout the country, but especially in Dili and in the Western districts. Some of the weapons were requisitioned directly from the armory but in other cases Lobato improperly took them from active police units. In one case, he said, Lobato ordered Border Patrol Commander Antonio de Cruz to give him 17 assault rifles and in another he took rifles from the Baucau Police Task Force and Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR). Martins documented the improper weapons transfers, gave the information to Foreign Minister Jose Ramos Horta, and also reported the matter to Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri. Several persons who received the uniforms and weapons have turned themselves in to the President and will be revealed publicly "at the appropriate time".

Martins on the Petitioners

18. (C) Martins presented a new spin on the deployment of the military to put down the riot in Tasitolu on April 28 and 29. According to Martins, General Taur Matan Ruak (TMR) expelled the "petitioners" from FDTL without following the correct procedures or preparing an official notice of dismissal. TMR knew that President would not support his decision, so he and his men, Col. Lere in particular, told the Prime Minister repeatedly that the petitioners were planning a coup and that he must meet the threat with military action. Alkatiri, whom Martins described as always prepared to believe people were after him, was easily convinced and, after the petitioner-led demonstration in front of his office turned violent, was determined to crush the petitioners. When the order came for the FDTL to intervene, Martins said, the military knew it was coming and was already

prepared.

Statements on the Dissident Military

19. (C) Martins denies rumors that he supported the dissident military groups such as the one led by Maj. Alfredo Reinado. On the contrary, he said, he had specifically refused a request from Maj. Marcos Tilman to deploy a detachment from the Police Reserve Unit (URP) to protect him in Gleno. Martins claims to have interviewed several of Maj. Reinado's men who were present when the first shots were fired in Fatuahi on May 23, and he believes Reinado ordered his men to fire first.

Military Patrols in Dili

10. (C) On the evening of May 23, Martins said, he attended a meeting that included Prime Minister Alkatiri, Minister of Defense Rodrigues, Minister of the Interior Lobato, and General Taur Matan Ruak. At the meeting it was decided that the Police and the Military should divide the responsibility for patrolling Dili between them. The military had already commenced operations in Dili, he said, but there had been several near misses between the police and FDTL. The organizations formally divided the city into military and police sectors. This was contrary to assurances by Alkatiri and other Government leaders that FDTL patrols in Dili consisted only of the participation of military police officers (MPs) in joint patrols with PNTL officers.

On Lobato, China, and Cuba

11. (C) According to Martins, Rogerio Lobato accuses the U.S. of conspiring with the petitioners and the Catholic Church. He believes that Timor should rely more heavily on the governments of China and Cuba for military training. He quoted Lobato as having said that the Cubans are most willing to provide as many military advisors as required and, if necessary, to have them pose as doctors so as not to arouse suspicion. Martins remains deeply angry with the Cubans because two of the doctors in Gleno

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allegedly refused to provide medical care to a police officer who had been wounded by the military.

REES